to that effect then. As a matter of fact, I answered it on the 25th If the hon. Member wants any more information, he can put a short-notice question arising out of the question already answered. I shall waive notice and answer it tomorrow or the day after that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that will serve the purpose of the hon. Member.

Theft of timber from Koothali Estate

* 2998 Q.—Sri P. KUNHIRAMA KIDAV: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government have received any report from the Estate Officer of Koothali Estate in Kurumbranad taluk regarding the theft of timber from Koothali estate;

(b) if so, the action taken to book the culprits and also to prevent theft in future?

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM: (a) Yes.

(b) Action was taken to prosecute the offenders in most cases. The offenders were convicted in four cases and acquitted in three cases. Nineteen cases were compounded, and the cuttings seized were sold in auction. Prosecution is pending in five cases. To prevent illicit cuttings, the provisions of section 26 of the Madras Forest Act, 1882, were extended to the Pillaperuvanna Malavaram and the management of the forest has since been taken over by the Forest Department.

Sri M. NARAYANA KURUP: In 1945, timber worth Rs. 20,000 was entrusted to the care of a forest official on personal surety? May I know whether any process was taken with respect to that for the recovery of the amount?

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM: That was ten years ago and I would request the hon. Member to put a separate question.

9-10 a.m. Sri P. KUNHIRAMA KIDAV: May I know from the Hon. Minister when the enquiry was conducted, who was authorized to conduct the enquiry and what was the result of the enquiry?

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM: The Collector was asked to enquire into it and it was found there was illicit felling and steps were taken to prevent illicit cutting. In order to ensure that in future there may not be large scale illicit cutting like this, the provisions of the Madras Forest Act have been extended to this area also.

Sri M. NARAYANA KURUP: The Hon. Minister mentioned a number of offences committed. Has the attention of the Government been drawn to a very recent judgment of the Tellicherry Assistant Sessions Judge where he has passed very severe strictures on the Forest Officials beginning from the Conservator of

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Forests, that they were actively helping the accused instead of helping the prosecution by their evidence? If so, what steps have been taken by the Government in the matter?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I am glad the hon. Member has brought this matter to the notice of the Government. I shall look into it and see what has to be done. I have so far not seen the judgment. If there is any further action to be taken, it will be taken.

Cost of living index for the working classes in the city

* 2999 *Q.*—SRI S. PAKKIRISWAMI PILLAI (on behalf of Sri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai): Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) the tenements or quarters, on the rental of which the Government computes the increased expenditure on rent;

(*b*) whether any items have been dropped in the recent compilations of the Madras City Working Class Cost of Living Index, as compared to the compilation in 1939;

(*c*) whether the method of calculating the increased expenditure under the heading "Transport" after the closing down of the Madras Electric Tramways has been changed and if so, from what date;

(*d*) the method adopted for calculating the price of vegetables when the index was first compiled and whether any changes have been made since then; and

(*e*) whether the incidence of sales tax has been taken into account when computing the current prices and comparing them with prices as obtaining in the month of June 1936?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: (*a*) *to* (*e*) The information required by the hon. Member is given in the statement [a] placed on the table of the House.

SRI S. PAKKIRISWAMI PILLAI: Sir, I would like to know what is the exact amount that is now computed to go into these figures as rent and also why there was a steep fall in the cost of living index in the second quarter of 1955 and a sudden rise thereafter in the third quarter?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I would like to have notice, Sir.

Salary of Health Inspectors

* 3000 *Q.*—SRI K. P. GOPALAN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Health be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Government propose to increase the salary of the Health Inspectors in the State?

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY: No, Sir.

[a] Printed as Appendix I on page 210 infra.